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PREFACE.

This book is an attempt to give a systematic account of the Khasi people, their manners and customs, their ethnological affinities, their laws and institutions, their religious beliefs, their folk-lore, their theories as to their origin, and their language.

This account would perhaps have assumed a more elaborate and ambitious form were it not that the author has been able to give to it only the scanty leisure of a busy district officer. He has been somewhat hampered by the fact that his work forms part of a series of official publications issued at the expense of the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam, and that it had to be completed within a prescribed period of time.

The author gladly takes this opportunity to record his grateful thanks to many kind friends who have helped him either with actual contributions to his material, or with not less valued suggestions and criticisms. The arrangement of the subjects discussed is due to Sir Bampfylde Fuller, lately Lieutenant-Governor of the Province, whose kindly interest in the Khasis will long be remembered by them with affectionate gratitude. The Introduction is from the accomplished pen of Sir Charles Lyall, to whom the author is also indebted for much other help and encou-

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INTRODUCTION.

121 In 1903 Sir Bampfylde Fuller, then Chief Commissioner
122 of Assam, proposed, and the Government of India sanctioned, the preparation of a series of monographs on the more important tribes and castes of the Province, of which this volume is the first. They were to be undertaken by writers who had had special and intimate experience of the races to be described, the accounts of earlier observers being at the same time studied and incorporated; a uniform scheme of treatment was laid down which was to be adhered to in each monograph, and certain limits of size were prescribed.

• 114 Major Gurdon, the author of the following pages, who is also, as Superintendent of Ethnography in Assam, editor of the whole series, has enjoyed a long and close acquaintance with the Khasi race, whose institutions he has here undertaken to describe. Thoroughly familiar with their language, he has for three years been in charge as Deputy-Commissioner of the district where they dwell, continually moving among them, and visiting every part of the beautiful region which is called
643 by their name. The administration of the Khasi and
101 Jaintia Hills is an exceptionally interesting field of official responsibility. About half of the district, including the country around the capital, Shillong, is outside the limits of British India, consisting of a collection of small states in political relations, regulated by treaty with the Government of India, which enjoy

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most of the neighbouring chiefs to resist the British, and a long and harassing war, which was not brought to a close till 1833. Cherrapunji then became the head-quarters of the Sylhet Light Infantry, whose commandant was placed in political charge of the district, including the former dominions in the hills of the Raja of Jaintia, which he voluntarily relinquished in 1835 on the confiscation of his territory in the plains.

Cherrapunji, celebrated as the place which has the greatest measured rainfall on the globe, became a popular station, and the discovery of coal there, and at several other places in the hills, attracted to it many visitors, some of whom published accounts of the country and people. The first detailed description was apparently that of the Rev. W. Lish, a Baptist missionary, which appeared in a missionary journal in 1838. In 1840 Capt. Fisher, an officer of the Survey Department, published in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal * an account which showed that the leading characteristics of the Khasi race had already been apprehended: he mentions the prevalence of matriarchy or mother-kinship, notes the absence of polyandry, except in so far as its place was taken by facile divorce, describes the religion as a worship of gods of valleys and hills, draws attention to the system of augury used to ascertain the will of the gods, and gives an account of the remarkable megalithic monuments which everywhere stud the higher plateaus. He also recognizes the fact that the Khasis as a race are totally distinct from the neighbouring hill tribes. In 1841 Mr. W. Robinson, Inspector of Schools in Assam, included an account of the Khasis in a volume on that province which was printed at Calcutta. In 1844 Lieut.

* Vol. ix., pp. 833 sqq.

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Yule (afterwards Sir Henry Yule) published in the Journal of the Bengal Asiatic Society* a much more detailed description of the hills and their inhabitants than had been given by Fisher. This formed the basis of many subsequent descriptions, the best known of which is the attractive account contained in the second volume of Sir Joseph Hooker's *Himalayan Journals*† published in London in 1854. Sir Joseph visited Cherrapunji in June 1850, and stayed in the hills until the middle of the following November.

Meanwhile the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Mission, originally located at Sylhet, had extended their operations to Cherrapunji, and in 1842 established a branch there. They applied themselves to the study of the Khasi language, for which, after a trial of the Bengali, they resolved to adopt the Roman character. Their system of expressing the sounds of Khasi has since that time continued in use, and after sixty years' prescription it would be difficult to make a change. Their Welsh nationality led them to use the vowel *y* for the obscure sound represented elsewhere in India by a short *a* (the *u* in the English *but*), and for the consonantal *y* to substitute the vowel *i*: *w* is also used as a vowel, but only in diphthongs (*aw*, *ew*, *iw*, *ow*); in other respects the system agrees fairly well with the standard adopted elsewhere. Primers for the study of the language were printed at Calcutta in 1846 and 1852, and in 1855 appeared the excellent "Introduction to the Khasia language, comprising a grammar, selections for reading, and a Khasi-English vocabulary," of the Rev. W. Pryse. There now exists a somewhat extensive literature in Khasi, both religious and secular. An exhaustive grammar, by the Rev. H. Roberts, was

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published in Trübner's series of "Simplified Grammars" in 1891, and there are dictionaries, English-Khasi (1875) and Khasi-English (1906), besides many other aids to the study of the language which need not be mentioned here. It is recognised by the Calcutta University as sufficiently cultivated to be offered for the examinations of that body. Two monthly periodicals are published in it at Shillong, to which place the headquarters of the District were removed from Cherrapunji in 1864, and which has been the permanent seat of the Assam Government since the Province was separated from Bengal in 1874.

The isolation of the Khasi race, in the midst of a great encircling population all of whom belong to the Tibeto-Burman stock, and the remarkable features presented by their language and institutions, soon attracted the attention of comparative philologists and ethnologists. An account of their researches will be found in Dr. Grierson's *Linguistic Survey of India*, vol. ii. Here it will be sufficient to mention the important work of Mr. J. R. Logan, who, in a series of papers published at Singapore between 1850 and 1857 in the *Journal of the Indian Archipelago* (of which he was the editor), demonstrated the relationship which exists between the Khasis and certain peoples of Further India, the chief representatives of whom are the Mōns or Talaings of Pegu and Tenasserim, the Khmērs of Cambodia, and the majority of the inhabitants of Annam. He was even able, through the means of vocabularies furnished to him by the late Bishop Bigandet, to discover the nearest kinsmen of the Khasis in the Palaungs, a tribe inhabiting one of the Shan States to the north-east of Mandalay on the middle Salween. With the progress of research it became apparent that the Mōn-Khmēr group of Indo-

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China thus constituted, to which the Khasis belong, was in some way connected with the large linguistic family in the Indian Peninsula once called Kolarian, but now more generally known as *Mundā*, who inhabit the hilly region of Chutia Nagpur and parts of the Satpura range in the Central Provinces. Of these tribes the principal are the Santhals, the Mundas, and the Korkus. In physical characters they differ greatly from the Indo-Chinese Khasis, but the points of resemblance in their languages and in some of their institutions cannot be denied; and the exact nature of the relation between them is as yet one of the unsolved problems of ethnology.

The work of Logan was carried farther by Prof. Ernst Kuhn, of Munich, who in 1883 and 1889 published important contributions to our knowledge of the languages and peoples of Further India. More recently our acquaintance with the phonology of Khasi and its relatives has been still further advanced by the labours of Pater W. Schmidt, of Vienna, whose latest work, *Die Mon-Khmer Völker, ein Bindeglied zwischen Völkern Zentralasiens und Australiens* (Braunschweig, 1906), has established the relationship of Khasi not only to the Mon-Khmĕr languages, but also to Nicobarese and several dialects spoken by wild tribes in the Malay Peninsula.

There still remains much to be done before the speech of the Khasi nation can be considered to have been thoroughly investigated. In the *Linguistic Survey* four dialects are dealt with, the standard literary form, founded on the language of Cherrapunji, the *Pnăr* or *Synteng*, of Jowai, the *Wăr*, spoken in the valleys on the southern face of the hills, and the *Lyngngăm*, spoken in the tract adjacent to the Garos on the west. Major Gurdon (p. 203) mentions a fifth, that of Jirang

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or Mynsir, spoken in the extreme north, and there may be others. A great desideratum for linguistic purposes is a more adequate method of recording sounds, and especially differences of tone, than that adopted for the standard speech, which though sufficient for practical purposes, does not accurately represent either the quantity or the quality of the vowels, and leaves something to be desired as regards the consonants (especially those only faintly sounded or suppressed). These things, no doubt, will come in time. The immense advance which has been made in education by the Khasis during the last half-century has enabled some among them to appreciate the interesting field for exploration and study which their own country and people afford; and there is reason to hope that with European guidance the work of record will progress by the agency of indigenous students.

It remains to summarize briefly the principal distinctive features of this vigorous and sturdy race, who have preserved their independence and their ancestral institutions through many centuries in the face of the attractions offered by the alien forms of culture around them.

In the first place, their social organization presents one of the most perfect examples still surviving of matriarchal institutions, carried out with a logic and thoroughness which, to those accustomed to regard the status and authority of the father as the foundation of society, are exceedingly remarkable. Not only is the mother the head and source, and only bond of union, of the family: in the most primitive part of the hills, the Synteng country, she is the only owner of real property, and through her alone is inheritance transmitted. The father has no kinship with his children, who belong to their mother's clan; what he earns goes

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787 diviners in ancient Hellas.* This method has (with
171 much else in Khasi practice) been adopted by the former subjects of the Khasis, the Mikirs; but it does not appear to be prevalent among any other of the animistic tribes within the boundaries of India.

28 The third remarkable feature of Khasi usage is the
171 custom, which prevails to this day, of setting up great
734 memorials of rough stone, of the same style and character as the *menhirs* and *cromlechs* which are found in Western Europe, Northern Africa, and Western Asia. It is very surprising to a visitor, unprepared for the sight by previous information, to find himself on arrival at the plateau in the midst of great groups of standing and table stones exactly like those he may have seen in Brittany, the Channel Islands, the south of England, or the Western Isles. Unfortunately the great earthquake of June 1897 overthrew many of the finest of these megalithic monuments; but several still remain, and of these Major Gurdon has given an excellent description (pp. 144 sqq.), with an explanation of the different forms which they assume and the objects with which they are erected. Other races in India besides the Khasis set up stone memorials; but none, perhaps, to the same extent or with the same systematic purpose and arrangement.

• 114 In conclusion, I have only to commend this work to the consideration of all interested in the accurate and detailed description of primitive custom. I lived myself for many years among the Khasis, and endeavoured to find out what I could about them; but much of what Major Gurdon records is new to me, though the book generally agrees with what I was able

* Called φοσσομαντεία: one of the lost books of the Orphic cycle was entitled τὰ φοσσομαντικά.

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to gather of their institutions and characteristics. It is, I think, an excellent example of research, and well fitted to stand at the head of a series which may be expected to make an important contribution to the data of anthropology.

C. J. Lyall.

November, 1906.

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villages, such as Shella, Sutnga, Umnish, and in Nartah in the Jaintia Hills.

ORIGIN.

The origin of the Khasi is a very vexed question. Although it is probable that the Khasis have inhabited their present abode for at any rate a considerable period, there seems to be a fairly general belief amongst them that they originally came from elsewhere. The Rev. H. Roberts, in the introduction to his Khasi Grammar, states that "tradition, such as it is, connects them politically with the Burmese, to whose king they were up to a comparatively recent date rendering homage, by sending him an annual tribute in the shape of an axe, as an emblem merely of submission." Another tradition points out the north as the direction from which they migrated, and Sylhet as the terminus of their wanderings, from which they were ultimately driven back into their present hill fastnesses by a great flood, after a more or less peaceful occupation of that district. It was on the occasion of this great flood, the legend runs, that the Khasi lost the art of writing, the Khasi losing his book whilst he was swimming at the time of this flood, whereas the Bengali managed to preserve his. Owing to the Khasis having possessed no written character before the advent of the Welsh missionaries, there are no histories as is the case with the Ahoms of the Assam Valley, and therefore no record of their journeys. Mr. Shadwell, the oldest living authority we have on the Khasis, and one who has been in close touch with the people for more than half a century, mentions a tradition amongst them that they originally came into Assam from Burma *viâ* the Patkoi range, having followed the route of one of the Burmese invasions. Mr. Shadwell has heard them mention the name Patkoi as a hill they met with on their journey. All this sort of thing is, however, inexpressibly vague. In the chapter dealing with "Affinities" have been given some reasons for supposing that the Khasis and other tribes of the Mon-Anam family, originally occupied a large portion of the Indian continent. Where the actual cradle of the Mon-Anam race was, is as

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impossible to state, as it is to fix upon the exact tract of country from which the Aryans sprung. With reference to the Khasi branch of the Mon-Anam family, it would seem reasonable to suppose that if they are not the autochthons of a portion of the hills on the southern bank of the Brahmaputra, and if they migrated to Assam from some other country, it is not unlikely that they followed the direction of the different irruptions of foreign peoples into Assam of which we have authentic data, i.e. from south-east to north-west, as was the case with the Ahom invaders of Assam who invaded Assam from their settlements in the Shan States *viâ* the Patkoi range, the different Burmese invasions, the movements of the Khamtis and, again, the Singphos, from the country to the east of the Hukong Valley. Whether the first cousins of the Khasis, the Mons, moved to their present abode from China, whether they are the aborigines of the portion of Burma they at present occupy, or were one of the races "of Turanian origin" who, as Forbes thinks, originally occupied the valley of the Ganges before the Aryan invasion, must be left to others more qualified than myself to determine. Further, it is difficult to clear up the mystery of the survival, in an isolated position, of people like the Ho-Mundas, whose language and certain customs exhibit points of similarity with those of the Khasis, in close proximity to the Dravidian tribes and at a great distance from the Khasis, there being no people who exhibit similar characteristics inhabiting countries situated in between; but we can, I think, reasonably suppose that the Khasis are an offshoot of the Mon people of Further India in the light of the historical fact I have quoted, i.e. that the movements of races into Assam have usually, although not invariably, taken place from the east, and not from the west. The tendency for outside people to move into Assam from the east still continues.

Affinities.

The late Mr. S. E. Peal, F.R.G.S., in an interesting and suggestive paper published in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1896, drew attention to certain illustrations of

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[114] "singular shoulder-headed celts," found only in the Malay Peninsula till the year 1875, when they were also discovered in Chota Nagpur, and figured in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* for June of that year. These "celts" are, as the name implies, ancient stone implements. Mr. Peal goes on to state the interesting fact that when he was at Leda and Tikak, Naga villages, east of Makum, on the south-east frontier of the Lakhimpur district of Assam, in 1895, he found iron implements, miniature hoes, used by the Nagas, of a similar shape to the "shoulder-headed celts" which had been found in the Malay Peninsula and Chota Nagpur. Now the peculiarly shaped Khasi hoe or *ma-kháiw*, a sketch of which is given, with its far projecting shoulders, is merely an enlarged edition of the Naga hoe described by Peal, and may therefore be regarded as a modern representative in iron, although on an enlarged scale, of the "shoulder-headed celts." Another interesting point is that, according to Forbes, the Burmese name for these stone celts is *mo-gyo*. Now the Khasi name for the hoe is *ma-kháiw*. The similarity between the two words seems very strong. Forbes says the name *mo-gyo* in Burmese means "cloud or sky chain," which he interprets "thunderbolt," the popular belief there, as in other countries, being that these palæolithic implements fell from heaven. Although the Khasi name *ma-kháiw* has no connection whatsoever with aerolites, it is a singular coincidence that the name for the Khasi hoe of the present day should almost exactly correspond with the Burmese name for the palæolithic implement found in Burma and the Malay Peninsula, and when it is remembered that these stone celts are of a different shape from that of the stone implements which have been found in India (with the exception of Chota Nagpur), there would seem to be some grounds for believing that the

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Colonel Lister, writing in 1853, estimated that 20,000 maunds of iron were exported from the hills in the shape of bées to the Assam Valley, and in lumps of pig iron to the Surma Valley, where it was used by boat-builders for clamps. Nowadays the smelting of iron is carried on in very few places. There are still smelting-houses at Nongkrem and Nongsprung, but these are practically the only places left where smelting of iron ore goes on; there are many forges where rough iron brought from the plains is melted down and forged into billhooks and hoes. Messrs. Yule and Craeroft have described the native process of smelting iron, and it is only necessary to refer to their papers if information is required on the subject. Yule's account is a very full one, and is to be found at page 853, vol. xi. part ii. of the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. The system pursued, both in the extraction and in the subsequent smelting of the ore, is the same at the present day as that described by Yule. Dr. Oldham, writing in 1863, says, "The quality of this Khasi iron is excellent for all such purposes as Swedish iron is now used for. The impurity of the blooms (or masses of the metal in a molten state), however, as they are sent to market, is a great objection to its use, and the waste consequent thereon renders it expensive. It would also form steel or wootz (Indian steel) of excellent quality. I have no doubt that the manufacture could be greatly improved and possibly extended." Dr. Oldham, however, goes on to remark that the manufacture of iron could not be very much extended, owing to the scanty dissemination of the ore in the rocks, and the consequent high cost of obtaining it. At present the want of any permanent supply of water prevents the natives from working for more than a few days during the year, whilst the rains are heavy, and they can readily obtain sufficient force of water for the washing of the ore from its matrix. The export of iron in any form from the district has now almost died out, only a few lows being brought down by the Khasis from Laitkem, in Khadawphra, to the Bordwar and Palashari markets in the Kamrup District of the Assam Valley. Iron of English manufacture has, of course, much cheapened the market, but probably the fact that the parts of the country in the neighbourhood of the rocks which contain the metal have

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from those of the Khasis and the Mons. Dr. Grierson comes to the same conclusion with respect to these languages as Professor Kuhn, which is as follows:—"Owing to the existence of these differences we should not be justified in assuming a common origin for the Mon-Khmêr langu..ges on the one hand, and for the Munda, Nancowry, and Malacca languages on the other. We may, however, safely assume that there is at the bottom of all these tongues a common substratum, over which there have settled layers of the speeches of other peoples, differing in different localities. Nevertheless, this substratum was so firmly established as to prevent its being entirely hidden by them, and frequent undeniable traces of it are still discernible in languages spoken in widely distant tracts of Nearer and Further India. Of what language this original substratum consisted we are not yet in a position to say. Whatever it was, it covered a wide area, larger than the area covered by many families of languages in India at the present day. Languages with this common substratum are now spoken, not only in the modern Province of Assam, in Burma, Siam, Cambodia, and Anam, but also over the whole of Central India, as far west as the Berars." Grierson, having agreed regarding the existence of this common substratum, does not finally determine whether the ancient substratum was the parent of the present Munda languages, or of the Mon-Khmêr language. He says, "It cannot have been the parent of both, but it is possible that it was the parent of neither." We are thus still in a state of uncertainty as to what was the origin of these languages.

The brief description which follows of some of the more prominent characteristics of the Khasi language is based chiefly on Sir Charles Lyall's skeleton Grammar contained in Vol. II. of Dr. Grierson's "Linguistic Survey of India." It does not pretend to be an exhaustive treatise on the language; for this students are referred to the excellent grammar compiled by the Rev. H. Roberts.

The Article.—There are four articles in Khasi; three in the singular, *u* (masculine), *ka* (feminine), and *i* (diminutive of both genders); and one in the plural for both genders, *ki*.

All Khasi nouns take a pronominal prefix to denote the gender, i.e. the third personal pronoun, *u* (masculine), *ka* (feminine),

782 must be appeased by throwing eggs. If the desired
[781] effect does not occur after the sacrifice has been offered, further information is sought by observing intestines (sacrifice of rooster), and the sacrifice is offered again. At least that is what is done for sickness. The other sacrifices will be described in more detail later.

771 The religion of the Khasi is one that arises
114 from fear of misfortune and harm, and is active in the worship of (evil) spirits through sacrifice. This definition of mine corresponds essentially with the definitions of Bivar, (3) who

[113] 3. Bivar, Administration Report on the Khasi and Jaintia Hills District of 1876.

says: "The Khasi religion may be briefly defined as a form to cure illnesses and to ward off misfortune, by finding out [410] the name of the devil who is the original cause of the evil and to appease him by sacrifices which are necessary," and Gurdon (4) "calls the Khasi religion a cult

[113] 4. Gurdon, The Khasi (London, 1907) p. 105.

of spirits, i.e., actually rather a reconciliation of spirits, good as well as bad, by sacrifices, which are offered occasionally, especially in times of distress."

Table of Summary

776 of several gods (good and evil) who are revered by the Khasi and the Synteng.

1. Good Gods:

u blei nongthaw, the creator god,
u 'lei longspah, the (good) god of wealth,

Editor's Note:

114 The author of this paper apparently uses several words to denote the same social group: Familie, Stamm, Sippe, Clan Stammesfamilie, Familienstamm, Familiensippe.

Stamm is translated as tribe when it refers to the Khasi as a whole, otherwise it is translated clan especially in the compounds Stammesgott, Stammgut, Stammeshütte, Stammesmutter. Sippe is also translated as clan; Stammesfamilie as clan-family; Familiensippe and Familienstamm as family-clan. The German word is occasionally kept in brackets.

Family Property and Maternal Rights

/127/ by C. Becker S.D.S., Wurzburg

The fall of 1910 and the entire following year found the distinguished head of the Ethnographic Museum in Munich, to whom this anniversary volume is dedicated, on a research and collection trip in the extensive and inexhaustible territories of India. He was accompanied by his active wife, who served as his scientific assistant. From Burma, a mine of rich, ethnographic treasure and where the greatest part of their Indian stay was spent, their journey led the research couple into Assam, situated in the northeast of India, a country of equal significance. Assam certainly belongs politically to anterior India, but forms a bridge to interior India both ethnographically and linguistically.

Among the mountain peoples who inhabit the chain of hills which traverses the length of present-day Assam, and which separates the two largest parts of the country from each other, the Brahmaputra Valley in the north and the Surma Plain in the south, is one of the most interesting and doubtless the most advanced of the tribes, the Khasi, who inhabit the so-called Khasi and Jaintia Mountains. It was in Shillong, the center of this area, which is now the capital of the country Assam under the English government, where towards the end of September, 1911, I first became acquainted with Professor D. L. Scherman and his wife and where a friendship of many years had its beginning. Therefore this little study will lead us to the Khasi Mountains, to its slopes overgrown with its peculiar pine trees, which receive greetings across the plains from the snow-crowned peaks of the Himalayas, which are flooded by the mighty waves of the Brahmaputra River and the alternating inundations of the Surma River. Here a contented and cheerful little people live who have maintained their own special characteristics in spite of the many European influences and those of neighboring cultures.

/128/ Of the entire population of 243,263 people, who form the inhabitants of the Khasi and Jaintai Mountains (1), 203,855 are Khasi.

1. The following statistical estimates are taken from the Census of India 1921, Vol. III, Assam, (Shillong, 1923) pp. I and II.

Of those, 37,852 have adopted Christianity, while the others are still adherents of ancient animistic cults, with the exception of somewhat

9: Godwin-Austen G-3 (no date) 1872 AR7 Khasi AR7

On the STONE MONUMENTS *of the* KHASI HILL TRIBES, *and on some of the Peculiar Rites and Customs of the People.* By Major H. H. GODWIN-AUSTEN, F.R.G.S., Deputy Superintendent Topographical Survey of India.

121 THE increasing interest that is taken at the present day in ethnology and the history of man in past and present ages, more particularly in the customs of semi-civilised races in distant quarters of the world as compared with the state of those races who dwelt in Europe in early historic times, has led me to put together the information I obtained regarding the people of the Khāsi Hill tracts. Their customs are peculiar, and the fact that they are among the very few who erect at the present day monolithic monuments, is alone of great interest.

This has not escaped the attention of different travellers, 122 officers of the Indian service and others who have visited that quarter of the Bengal Presidency, and from time to time papers have been published; these are scattered through a number of periodicals, and in no case is a complete record of these Hill people to be found.

Notices on the Garos and Khāsis, as well as many of the other tribes on the north-eastern frontier of Bengal, are generally very short, in some instances mislead, and in some cases do the peo- 152 ple, savages though they be, but little justice; in truth, there is very much to admire in these Hill people, they are in many ways, socially and physically, far above their Bengāli neighbours of the plains; intercourse with them is, in consequence, much pleasanter, easier, and has far greater interest; innate honesty and truth in their manners of dealing often crop out, more especially in villages well within the hills, where contact with the people of the plains is of rare occurrence.

101 I shall notice the best of these papers having reference to tribes inhabiting the range of hills running west to east, south of Assam, from the sharp southern bend of the Brahmaputra up to the Kopili and Diyung river, in long. 92 deg. 45 min., a length of some one hundred and sixty-five miles.

114 In the "Asiatic Researches," vol. iii, published so far back as 1792, is a very interesting paper on the Gāros, by Mr. John 113 Eliot; his travels, however, did not extend so far to the east as the Khāsias.

The Rev. A. B. Lish, a missionary of Cherra Poonjee, published an account of the Khāsias in the "Calcutta Christian Observer" for 1838, he gives an account of their mode of breaking eggs for omens, etc.

Neither in M'Cosh's "Topography of Assam," or in Robinson's "Assam," is any newer or better information afforded concerning

9: Godwin-Austen G-3 (no date) 1872 AR7 Khasi AR7

the Gāro or Khāsi than is to be found in earlier writers, and no allusion is made to the stone monuments. The first contains a very exaggerated and by no means faithful account of both the Khāsi and Gāro, and the latter has copied Elliott's descriptions. 114 113

Dr. Hooker, in his "Himalayan Journals," gives some good drawings of the stone monuments—alludes briefly to their form, and the habits of the people. Dr. Hooker also alluded to the Khāsias at the meeting of the British Association at Norwich in 1868; thus attention was drawn to them in a prominent manner. A paper was written shortly after this by Lieut. E. N. Steel, R.A., who had been quartered for some time at Cherra Poonjee, and published in the "Transactions of the Ethnological Society," vol. vii.

The latest paper that we have on the Khāsias is one published in the "Ausland" of last year, by — Schlagintweit, yet is not confined solely to the people, but treats of the meteorology of the district, and very briefly of the geology. The Gāros and Nāgas are also noticed. I hope to be able in a future paper to call attention to these people, and shall then allude to one or two paragraphs where I think M. Schlagintweit has been led into error. To one such error I would now refer. He says, "The Khassias are the most numerous and most powerful of the tribes inhabiting the part running from west to south (he must mean east) in this mountainous district, but it is also necessary to mention the two groups of Gārdos and Jaintias who are their neighbours in the south (he must mean the east) and the west. The grade of civilisation of the Gārdos and Jaintias is very low, etc., etc." Now, M. Schlagintweit must have been quite misinformed as regards the Jaintias, and he has evidently never been among them, or he would have known that the Jaintias, or more properly speaking, the Sintengs, are of the same stock as the Khāsis, that the language is the same with some slight modification, and that their customs and religious rites are almost identical. In Cherra Poonjee itself there is a small hamlet of emigrants from the Jaintia side, and they are found living among the Khasias in the main village. Many of the clans in Cherra claim to have originally come, several generations back, from the side of Jawai. 114

M. Schlagintweit further on says:—"The want of all modesty in the grown-up people of these primitive races, to whom we apply the term savages, is very remarkable." With this statement I do not agree, and consider they have the feeling strongly developed, and are quite as particular about the exposure of their persons as the people of India proper. The Gāro wears the "Lungooti" quite as large as that worn by the lower classes in Bengal and N. W. Provinces, etc.,

9: Godwin-Austen G-3 (no date) 1872 AR7 Khasi AR7

114 etc., when employed at heavy labour. Very much more decent is it than the thin gauze-like cloth worn by even the better class of Baboo in Calcutta, which makes hardly any pretence of concealing the private parts. I can speak for the Gāro women being particularly quiet and modest in their demeanour; and the young men on reaching a certain age, and until they marry, live and take their meals apart in a large house constructed for them; this is always the largest in the village, and where strangers are put up. This custom mitigates strongly against "their want of modesty", so often advanced, and proves, if anything, an advanced state of morality.

Again, in speaking of the Khasis and the looseness of their family and domestic relations, which are somewhat easy, the frequent changing of wives is not so common as might be supposed, and in the remoter villages I should say very rare.. There is a very strong force which militates against its frequent practice. The men of these tribes select thei wives not for beauty and delicacy, but for their well-developed forms and hard-working qualities—those who can carry heavy loads throughout the day; and the more children she begets the better for the pair: they can cultivate as these grow up a larger area, and live in greater comfort.

[113] In the *Calcutta Christian Observer*, March, 1852, is to be found one of the best papers on the Khāsis, by the Rev. W. Pryse, who was attached to the We'sh Mission working both at Cherra Poonjee and Sylhet. A very good article appears in the *Calcutta Review* for 1856, vol. 27, being a review of the "Geology of the Khāsi Hills, with Observations on the Meteorology and Ethnology of that District," by Thomas Oldham, Superintendent of the Geological Survey of India. a work containing much valuable and interesting matter. An Introduction to the Khāsia Language, by the Rev. W. Pryse, is also included in the above review.

114 101 The various ways in which the word Khāsi has been spelt by different writers, has no doubt puzzled many an European reader, and will be familiar no doubt to some in the form of Cossyah, Khassyah, Kasia, etc. The most correct has been adopted by the mission at Cherra Poonjee in their printed works in the language, and adopted in this paper.

101 197 They call themselves Ki Khási, and their country Ká Ri Khási;* and without going out of our way to seek for a derivation of this word, may it not be derived from the Hindustani "Ghāsi"—grassy: the whole of the upper lands being of this nature, in contradiction to the forest-clad valleys and slopes of the outer hills both north and south. The Khásias never pro-

* Compare "Rhi", a mountain (Tibetan).

9: Godwin-Austen G-3 (no date) 1872 AR7 Khasi AR7

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Memoranda of Size and Height of the Stones composing the Monument at Lailangkote, Khāsi Hills (from careful measurement of same).

UPRIGHT STONES OF GRANITE.

	Cubic feet.	Total, cubic feet.
No. 1=13ft. 10in. × 4ft. 0in. × 1ft. 6in.	=83·0	
3=18ft. 9in. × 3ft. 6in. × 9in.	=49·2	
10=11ft. 2in. × 4ft. 0in. × 1ft. 0in.	=44·7	
		176.9

UPRIGHT STONES OF SANDSTONE.

2=18ft. 6in. × 3ft. 4in. × 1ft. 8in.	=104·7
4=12ft. 6in. × 3ft. 0in. × 1ft. 8in.	= 63·8
5= 9ft. 0in. × 3ft. 0in. × 1ft. 6in.	= 40·5
6= 8ft. 3in. × 2ft. 4in. × 9in.	= 14·4
7=10ft. 9in. × 4ft. 8in. × 1ft. 2in.	= 58·6
8= 9ft. 6in. × 2ft. 9in. × 1ft. 2in.	= 30 6
9=10ft. 9in. × 2ft. 6in. × 2ft. 2in	= 58·4
11=12ft. 5in. × 2ft. 6in. × 1ft. 6in.	= 46·7
	417.7
	594·6

THE LARGEST FLAT STONE OF GRANITE.

Greatest length, 30ft. 4in.; breadth, 10ft.; and mean thickness, about 1 foot: measured by co-ordinates laid off from a central line, at 2 feet apart, with the thickness at edge. Total of cubic feet in mass 329·0.

FLAT STONES ON SOUTHERN SIDE, AND THE TWO STEPS.

	Mean breadth.	Mean length.	Mean thickness.	Cubic feet.
No. 1=	6ft. 0in. ×	8ft. 4in. ×	8ft. 0in.	=33·0
2=	5ft. 8in. ×	9ft. 8in. ×	1ft. 6in.	=82·0
3=	5ft. 2in. ×	9ft. 9in. ×	1ft. 4in.	=67·0
4=	5ft. 1in ×	7ft. 2in. ×	1ft. 4in	=49·0
5=	9ft. 3in. ×	5ft. 8in. ×	1ft. 0in.	=52·0
6=	3ft. 2in. ×	5ft. 8in. ×	8in.	=12.0

295·0 cubic feet.

The specific gravity of granite being taken at 2·6, or 163 lbs., the weight of the Lailangkote granite by experiment, we have for the weight of the largest flat stone, 329 cubic feet=tons 23 : 18 : 3 : 7; for the other six, 295 cubic feet=tons 21 : 9 : 1 : 9.

DISCUSSION.

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Dr. CHARNOCK said the "Asiatic Researches" for the year 1828 contained a short paper by a Mr. Walters on the Khāsi (Cāsias). The paper in question, which related to the village of Supar-Punji, also contained drawings of certain stone monuments; among others, four large circular stones standing together. They were only a few feet

9: Godwin-Austen G-3 (no date) 1872 AR7 Khasi AR7

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high, with a smooth surface, and resembled trees cut down; but it did not appear for what purpose they were used. Mr. Walters stated that the uprights and stone doors referred to in the paper were monuments to the memory of deceased rajahs and chiefs; that the upright slabs of granite were detached from the rock by means of fire; and that the dead bodies of the Khāsi are burned at an appointed place, and the ashes placed in earthen pots, which are deposited under the stones. He (Dr. Charnock) doubted the suggested derivation of the name of the tribe. If derived from the Hindústání, it could not be very ancient. The chief interest in the paper lay in the fact that the Khāsi erect these monuments at the present day.

Sir DUNCAN GIBB said there was a feature of some interest in the author's very interesting paper, and that was the statement that the stones of the megalithic remains described by him were obtained from quarries of sandstone not far distant from the place in which they were erected. Now, this point he looked upon as of considerable importance, because it so readily explained the comparative facility of transport of such huge masses of stone as entered into the construction of the monument described. In this country the most diverse opinions prevailed as to the locality whence the stones were obtained composing such monuments as are found at Stonehenge, Aylesbury, and other places, and he thought the author had added to the value of his paper by giving accurate details as to the locality whence the stone was obtained, composing the remarkable monuments so graphically illustrated; nevertheless, as a geologist, he should like to know from the author to what formation these sandstones belonged.

Col. A. LANE FOX thought the Institute might be congratulated upon the paper which they had just heard, which was one of the most important contributions to anthropology that had been received for some time past. It was impossible to overrate the value of the details of the manners and customs which Major Godwin Austin had given, and which were associated with the erection of these megalithic monuments at the present time. They might at some future time serve as links of evidence in interpreting the object of similar monuments in other times and places. The great problem before the Institute, he thought, was how far the builders of these monuments in our own time might be regarded as the representatives of those who erected them in the prehistoric period of Europe, or how far the monuments themselves might be regarded as survivals from the prehistoric age. The geographical distribution of these monuments, as he had before shown in the *Ethnological Journal*, was continuous, or nearly so, extending from those Kassias in the north-east of India to Central India, Persia, Asia Minor, the Crimea, along the north coast of Africa bordering the Mediterranean. They are found in Etruria, up the south and west coast of France into Britain, and as far as Denmark and Sweden. In so far as our present knowledge enabled us to judge, they were unknown in Russia proper, in Northern Asia, in Central and Southern Africa, and on the two continents of America, with the exception of Peru. Their continuous geographical distribu-

9: Godwin-Austen G-3 (no date) 1872 AR7 Khasi AR7

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tion extending from our own country to the country of these Kassias was in favour of the view that their erection might be a practice handed down by them from the remotest time; and this gave great additional interest to the study of the customs of the people who built them. Evidence of great antiquity of these monuments in India was wanting; most of those examined in Central India have been found to be associated with implements of iron; but it had been shewn that iron in the soil in that country would be preserved for ages, and there was no knowing how far back the use of this metal might have extended. There was one peculiar custom which in Europe, Africa, and Russia appeared to have nearly the same geographical distribution as those monuments, and which was sometimes associated with them; he alluded to the custom of placing pieces of rags upon trees at holy wells and elsewhere as a cure for diseases, and he should like to ask Major Austin whether this custom prevailed amongst these Kassias or in their neighbourhood.

Mr. Hyde Clarke observed that Colonel Fox had just enumerated the geographical region of megalithic monuments, and this was precisely the region described in his paper on the Caucaso-Tibetans. The areas are coincident. The Khasias are seated among tribes, which have linguistic affinities with Georgian and Palæogeorgian. The present Khasias cannot, however, be considered as *in situ* in reference to the ancient migration connected with the stone monuments of the Dekkan, but are a subsequent migration. The connection of traditions between Khasias, etc., and Burmah is simply because they are obtained from a common centre in High Asia. Among the many valuable facts is that of the male and female stones, and the numbers of these are, perhaps, also male and female. The numbers three and seven signify middle. In two cases where eleven occur they are arranged as six and five. The male stones are more numerous than the female, and may have some relation to polyandrous notions. Egg divination may possibly have its metaphysical basis in the relations which exist in many languages in the form of words for eye (eage) and egg. Major Austen's testimony to the moral qualities of the hill tribes is of value. Dr. Hunter, hon. member Anthropological Institute, has pointed out in his *Rural Life in Bengal* that it is on the hill tribes we must greatly rely for the invigoration of our Indian empire.

Mr. W. C. Dendy: The great merit of this paper is that it is written by a careful observer who was an eye-witness of all which he describes; one such narrative is worth a volume of compilations. In our own region the megalith is a relic of very ancient date, the record, perhaps, of a semi-barbarous race, and all account of them is usually speculative and conjectural. In the east we learn there are kistvaens and cromlechs and dolmens of recent date, the constructors of which are yet in existence, and an inquiry into their history may elucidate by analogy some of the obscurity that has yet clouded our own megalithic monuments. Choir Gawr or Stonehenge is composed of several sorts of rock, blue stone and marble, sand and granitic: why is this variety of selection? Among Major Austen's sketches there is

9: Godwin-Austen G-3 (no date) 1872 AR7 Khasi AR7

764 211 114 one of a beautiful megalithic temple, and he alluded to male and female stones. May this variety of quality and colour in the stones be symbolical of idol or astral or planetary worship? In Asia, it seems, these relics are chiefly within a certain latitude forming a belt from Oceania to the Mediterranean, the zone, indeed, of the anthropomorphous simiæ; and we have accounts of the relics of Asiatic pigmies discovered in and around one of these cromlechs not remote from the Khasi Hills. Remembering the influence of climate on both mind and body, it might be interesting to inquire how far a superstitious psychology may be an ethnic trait among the less accomplished orientals.

Dr. A. Campbell, Mr. James Fergusson, Mr. J. W. Flower, Dr. Seemann, Mr. E. B. Tylor, Mr. Wake, and the Chairman, also took part in the discussion.

10:Clarke U-3 (no date)1874 AR7 Khasi AR7

211 middle; annexed is a representation of a common type containing five stones.

A common height for the middle stone of such a monument will be six to ten feet, by 2-3 feet wide. The stones are sunk not very deep, say 1-2 feet, into the earth; great numbers of fallen stones are seen. Monuments of this character are often placed on the crest of the hills, and in many parts of Khasi-land the landscape appears dotted over with them.

The horizontal slabs are commonly grouped in pairs. The flat slabs may be 5-10 feet long, and are rarely so exactly quadrangular, and they generally have some of the corners irregularly rounded off, and thus pass into the oval or round horizontal slab, which is also a frequent type.

The upright and horizontal slabs are often combined to form a single monument, and perhaps the commonest of all the combinations is that in which five upright slabs have two horizontal before them. The combinations adopted are, however, endless in variety. In these combinations it must be understood that the whole group of stones forms one indivisible monument, which may be the monument of one individual, a household, or a family. Families retain a history of the monuments which belong to the family, and thus in a small degree of the names of their ancestors. Such family monuments may be repaired, added to, or rebuilt from time to time. They are not necessarily placed where the family ashes are kept in kists, or near such kists; but they are usually at no great distance from the village where the family dwells.

The putting up a large stone, say one that stands fifteen feet out of the ground, is a very costly matter, and the monuments of the first class in size in the Khasi country are not very numerous; in the monuments of small stones, the number of stones is often great, I have noticed twenty-one stones in a row, no stone exceeding two feet high.

The upright slabs are (particularly when unaccompanied by any horizontal slabs) usually placed in a straight line. But frequently, where the horizontal slab is round, the upright slabs stand in the arc of a circle, and sometimes the upright slabs are placed in a curved line apparently by accident, or because the nature of the steep ground suggested such an arrangement. Two such monuments occur on the main road to Lailankote.

114 Major Godwin-Austen states in his article on the subject that
301 the upright slabs *always* stand in threes, fives, sevens, etc. This
211 is a mistake; to have the number of stones unequal, with the central slab the tallest, is perhaps the plan adopted in forty-nine monuments out of fifty; but among the vast variety of monuments

10: Clarke U-3 (no date)1874 AR7 Khasi AR7

in these hills a dozen monuments on the binary type may soon be found in which there are two equal upright slabs in the middle, and the other stones placed symmetrically on each side of them.

7. There are three kinds of rock employed by the Khasis for stone monuments, viz.:—

a. The Cherra sandstones.
b. The Shillong sandstones.
c. The granite.

Small stones are conveyed considerable distances from the place of manufacture before they are set up—large stones are not—hence the material of the monuments is determined everywhere geologically.

a. The Cherra sandstones are tertiary and cretaceous rocks spread along the southern edge of the plateau and producing the ledges which mark its abrupt termination. In the great thickness of these sandstones are many beds in which the rock occurs in large sheets with very few joints, and well-adapted for working out large slabs therefrom. The sandstone is generally very hard, but not so hard but that the Khasis can work it with their own native-made iron tools.

There is a quarry, now in full work, about half-a-mile out of the old Cherra cantonment, upon the Mamloo path, where slabs may be seen in preparation. The slabs made from the Cherra sandstones, admitting of being worked, are generally hewn pretty fairly to a shape and smoothed before being set up. The ancient monuments are, however, often made of very rough slabs.

All the well-known monuments near the old Cherra station are made of these sandstones, as also the large monuments at Mamloo, Mausmai, and Lirinow. These three monuments all stand on sheets of Cherra sandstone and the stones were cut out of the rock hard by where they now stand. The stones quarried now outside the Cherra cantonment, being for transport, are none of great size.

The Khasis also work gigantic slabs of stone for bridges. Where the span is anything under twenty feet a single slab four or five feet wide and two feet thick is thrown across; piers of enormous blocks of sandstone are raised on each side, on which the slab may rest, if there is the remotest fear that the water can, in any flood, reach the under surface of the slab. As compared with such a bridge the Khasis regard the best efforts of the English engineers as mere makeshifts. The arch at Amwee figured by Dr. Hooker is Bengali work.

b. The Shillong sandstones extend over a large area of the northern portion of the plateau: they are often more argillaceous

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KHASI KINSHIP AND SOCIAL ORGANISATION

BY

PROF. K. P. CHATTOPADHYAY.

Introduction

114 121 In a paper on Khasi marriage rules Prof. Hodson has tried to explain the special features of the Khasi kinship terms and marriage rules on the hypothesis of a former dual division of Khasi Society, and certain new social forces which came into operation when the dual society broke up (1).

Hodson used for his work, the kinship terms noted in the Assam Census Report (2), Gurdon's work on Khasis (3) and a dictionary by U. Nissorsing. A full list of Khasi kinship terms was published by Rai Bahadur S. C. Roy shortly afterwards (4). The list is stated to have been compiled with the help of the ex- Siem of Cherra, on the genealogical method. The genealogies have not however been printed, and detailed notes are not available.

Recently the writer of this paper proceeded to the village of Mawphlang, the head-quarters of the Khasi State of this name and collected a certain amount of data to discuss this problem. The village is situated to the southwest of Shillong, at a distance of sixteen miles, and has preserved the old customs to a fair extent. It is ruled over by a lyngdoh or priest-chief, assisted by four myntris. At the time of the visit, the lyngdoh was away, suspended by the Political Agent for misgovernment, and the powers of the State were vested in the council of myntris. The senior myntri U Subu Rai, who is an old man

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[This source has been processed for the AR7 Khasi file -- Analyst.]

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nearly seventy years of age, spoke English a little, and kindly agreed to help by acting as introducer as well as interpreter. The Chowkidar of the bungalow, a Christian Khasi who spoke Hindi tolerably well was however our principal interpreter. Before proceeding to the village, I had studied Roberts' Khasi Grammar and also learnt simple sentences in Khasi necessary for collecting genealogies, kinship terms and connected details, like the inheritance of the ancestral house and lands. This portion of the data was collected entirely through questions and answers in Khasi; the other details were obtained with the help of myntri U Subu Rai and his friends and the Chowkidar, U Hudrington. On important points however, some checking was made, by simple questions in Khasi, which involved definite answers in the affirmative or negative. My students who had accompanied me for training in field studies, repeated some of my observations, in my presence and with my help and guidance.

My best thanks are due to Mr. K. Cantlie, Deputy Commissioner, Khasi and Jaintia Hills, for furnishing me with the letter of introduction to U Subu Rai and for other facilities. His published notes on Khasi law, especially the chapters on inheritance also proved to be of great value in carrying out the enquiries (5). In the subsequent portions of this article, references to the works of Gurdon and Cantlie, will be indicated merely by (G) and (CN) respectively.

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Generally the terms for (*i*) and (*iii*) are the same. In a few instances a distinction was said to be made. Many people however do not observe such distinctions. In the list of kinship terms published by Rai Bahadur S. C. Roy, this distinction has not been made. While his list agrees with mine in many respects, there are important differences. He has noted certain identities in kinship terms, which I did not find, and which have not been noted also in the Census Report.

The kinship system of the Khasis has certain special features:

(*a*) There is a clear distinction drawn in the kinship terms, with regard to seniority and juniority in age between siblings. This distinction is also made in the generation above that of the speaker, with regard to the mother's sisters, and father's brothers and their spouses. It is also observed with regard to the mother's brothers but not with regard to the father's sisters or the spouses, or their children. The distinction is however observed throughout in terms of address.

(*b*) A woman refers to her sister's children by the same term as a man to his brother's children; but a woman refers to her brother's children by a different term, which is applied also by her brother to her children.

(*c*) Certain kin are grouped together. The same term, for example is applied to the mother, step mother, the mother's sisters, and the wives of the brothers of the father. Similarly, the father, the step father, the father's brothers and the husdands of the mother's sisters are grouped together. In both cases, the actual father and mother are referred to by a term, to which adjectives denoting seniority and juniority are added for the other relatives. The mother's brother and the father's sister's husband have a common term. But the mother's brother is always distinguished by adding the adjective of age noting his position as elder or younger uncle. The father's sister's husband is not so distinguished. The sister of the father is clearly distinguished

12: Mukherjee et al. E-4, 5 (1940) 1941 AR7 Khasi AR7

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THE KHASI HUTS OF MAWPHLANG

BY

RAM KRISHNA MUKHERJEE, RAM CHANDRA BOSE, SALIL RAI CHAUDHURI, SAROJ GUPTA AND KUMARES SENGUPTA

114 Post-Graduate students of the Department of Anthropology of the University of Calcutta are expected to do a certain amount of field work for practical training. In 1940 a Khasi village was studied by us, the students of the Post-Graduate class, as part of our training, under the guidance of Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay, the Head of the Department of Anthropology, whom we have 121 to thank also for the photographs used for this paper. This note 342 on Khasi house structure is based on our work in the village of Mawphlang, the headquarters of the Khasi State of this name, in the Khasi Hills, Assam. Our studies included a survey of the village and its house types. Particular attention was paid to the structure of the old type of Khasi house.

342 Gurdon in his book on the Khasis of Assam describes the Khasi hut as elliptical in shape. But in Mawphlang we found that they can be more strictly said to be 'U'-shaped, in ground plan the bend of the 'U' being the front, the two parallel arms the sides, and a straight line connecting the two ends of the two arms of the 'U' the rear. We found this to be the type of most of the old houses of Mawphlang village. As is well known it is the custom among Khasis for the women of a family to live together, until the number of members increases so much that they cannot be provided with room in a single house. Then new houses are built It is usual for a married couple with children to put up a separate

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IV. THE PLACE OF THE KHASI IN THE WORLD.

By

David Roy

131 [614] [611] [197] The Khasi country lies in the hills of the province of Assam in North East India. Khasi clans are exogamous and matrilneal, and the Khasis speak a MonKhmer language.

121 In speaking of the place of the Khasi in the world I intend to explain the Khasi's own view of his relation to other peoples of the world.*

829 The Khasi is very conscious of his importance. He says a Khasi claims to be the centre of the world. The Khasi has acquired such a feeling of self-importance from his great confidence in himself; and this confidence he has derived from the position in which his relationship-terminology represents him as standing with respect to himself and the world around him. Or, rather, his relationshisp terms and language are an expression of his attitude and notions.

601 The Khasi says—*Ka Kamie* (mother)

U Khun (son) — *Ka Kmie* (mother)

Which is = His mother

Himself (male) — His sister (female)

He calls this the family. Then he says—

Ka Kamie Kha (Father's mother)

U Kpa Kha (Father, Father's brother) (male) — *Ka Nia Kha* Father Father's sister (female)

[114] * The writer of th is article is himself a Khasi (Christian).

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7 •
Garo AR5

From the beginning of my field work, my interest lay in a *comparative* study of the two systems, not in preparing a complete monograph of the cultures of the two peoples. I used the period of my field research in working among the two peoples alternately, so that I could constantly check from one field to the other as new problems appeared.

The period of my field work was very limited (October, 1955-February, 1956). I did not know the vernacular of either the Garo or the Khasi (Since Garo language has much commonness with Tibetan language which I was used to read and speak, I could quickly get used to follow their speech during my field work, but I failed to do so in Khasi language). I employed altogether five local English-speaking interpreters (out of the five, three were pagan, and all had relatives in the villages where I worked). But I already had experience in studying the economic and social organization of other hill peoples in Assam, having carried out two years (1953-1955) field work among tribes in Tripura State and among the Tangkul Nagas in Manipur State, as also among Himalayan peoples. This all helped me a great deal in my work among the Garo and the Khasi, and is one of the reasons why I could collect such a considerable amount of *data*, in spite of the alove mentioned handicaps of my actual field work. (Later on, I carried out field research for four months among the Nayar of Kerala, to provide further *data* for comparative study.

The Garo and the Khasi present very different structures from each other. In order to present a more effective picture of each structure, I have used different ways of presentation, each of which brings out certain important theoretical implications. The emphasis is laid accordingly upon different features: in the case of the Garo, it is the marriage system in relation to the village community; in the case of the Khasi, it is variation in marriage forms related to the structure of descent groups.

I wish to express my profound gratitude, first of all, to the Elin Wagner Foundation in Stockholm, by whose generous grant the field work of this study was carried out, and next to Professor C. Lévi-Strauss, who has consistently encouraged me to complete this manuscript and has very kindly given me this opportunity for publication. I am greatly indebted also to: Professor Fred Eggan, Professor Raymond Firth, Professor Meyer Fortes, Professor C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, Dr. E. R. Leach, Dr. Audrey Richards, and Professor D. M. Schneider for much stimulating discussion and helpful comment on the theoretical problems of this study.

I am grateful for invitations from the Department of Anthropology, University of Chicago (1959-1960) and the Department of Cultural Anthropology, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London (1960-1961), as also for an association with the Department

16: McCormack E-4,5 (1956-1958) 1964
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[P. 105 B]

NORTHERN UPLAND GROUPS

KHASIS[1]

Synonyms. Cassia, Cossyah, Kasia, Kassia, Kassya, Kasya, Khasia, Khasiah, Khasi, Khassia, Khosia 101

ORIENTATION. Identification and location. The term Khasi has often been applied to that portion 101 131 197 114 122

[1] This account of Khasi culture, contributed by Anne P. McCormack, is based on field work during 1950-58 in the United Khasi-Jaintia Hills District. The author wishes to emphasize that her data are on the upland Khasis who inhabit the center of the District. She gratefully acknowledges support of the field work from the Department of Anthropology of the University of Chicago, the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, Inc., and the Ford Foundation, for one of its Foreign Area Training Fellowships.

group of matrilineal and Mon-Khmer-speaking people who claim as their ancestral homeland the present-day United Khasi-Jaintia Hills District (within approximately 90° 4' and 92° 52' E. and 25° 9' and 26° 9' N.). This group includes the Jaintias (also Pnar or Syntreng) in the southeast, who differ from the Khasis primarily in their duolocal residence pattern and less virulent forms of sorcery. (The Hadems in eastern Jaintia are a Kuki people.) It also includes the Lyngngams (also spelled Lyngam) in the west, who practice migratory swidden agriculture and certain peculiar funerary rites, and are said by Ehrenfels (1958) to be culturally intermediate between Khasis and Garos. Finally, it includes Bhoys, Wars, and upland Khasis, which terms are primarily territorial. Bhoy country is the north-central part of the District, and is culturally complicated by the presence of Mikirs, Lalungs, and Nepalis. War country spans the entire southern length of the District, so that Wars divide into Jaintia Wars and Khasi Wars, of these, the Khasi Wars have traditionally transmitted property to sons as well as to daughters. The upland center of the District is the country of the Khasis proper, those whose culture provides the most useful model for interpreting the variations found elsewhere. [For general reference on all categories of Khasi culture, cf. Costa 1938 and 1937, also Gurdon 1907, especially for data on regional variations.] **Geography.** The District is 5,594 square miles of hilly tableland, intricately dissected by numerous rivers, and marked by significant ecological variation over very short distances. The tablelands step gently downward north from Shillong Peak, which at 6,443 feet is the highest point in the District, and over about 55 miles east into the Brahmaputra valley where this is some 250 feet above sea level. To the south, the land slopes more steeply downward for about 20 miles, and then drops abruptly, in cliff and steep-slope formations, to the Ganges sea-level delta that begins at its north with Sylhet. The annual southwest monsoons drop torrential rains around Cherrapunji and Mawsynram villages (for Cherrapunji, a record 905 inches in 1961), but then, reaching Shillong 33 miles to the northeast, provide only about 100 inches per year. Rainfall is again greater in Bhoy, which shares the Brahmaputra valley climate. Climate is temperate on the high Shillong plateau, where it seldom freezes and never snows. To the north, climate becomes subtropical, forest is jungle, and fauna abound. The climate to the south is also subtropical. [Cf. Hooker 1901, chap. XXIX.] **Linguistic affiliation.** Khasi is one of the major Mon-Khmer languages, related to Mon, Khmer, Semang-Sakai, Nicobarese, and Pa-laung-Wa. The major Khasi dialects are Khasi, Jaintia, and Lyngngam, to which Grierson adds War. Further minor variations occur from village to village. The Khasis had no script until 1842, when the roman alphabet was successfully applied to the Cherrapunji dialect of Khasi proper. [Cf. Rabel 1961, Grierson 1903-28; Jj Roth 1842.]

101
131
197
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184
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563
[428]
[113]
133
[131]
132
[113]
197
(2.12)
[113]

ing from the time it consists of an elementary family until it grows to a local descent group four generations deep. [Cf. Chattopadhyay 1941.] **Kin terminology.** The terms of address given below are also terms of reference except where otherwise indicated, and are uniform for male and female speakers. They were collected in an upland Khasi village near Shillong (cf. Ehrenfels 1953 for some regional variants).

Fa	*pa*
Mo	*mei*
FaElBr	*pasan*
FaYoBr	*pakhynnah*
FaSi	*kha*
Fa youngest Si	*khaduh*
MoElSi	*meisun*
MoYoSi	*meinah*
Mo youngest Si	*meiduh*
MoElBr	*mama, kni*
MoYoBr	*bah* (ref.: *kni*)
ElBr	*bah khynnah*
Eldest Br	*kong bah*
YoBr	*bah deng*
Youngest Br	*bah duh*
ElSi	*deng*
Eldest Si	*lud, kong*
YoSi	*lud nah, lud rit*
Youngest Si	*khatduh*
MoSiSo, MoSiDa	*para* (ref.: *para ar kmie*)
FaBrSo, FaBrDa	*para* (ref.: *parakha*)
MoBrSo, MoBrDa, FaSiSo, FaSiDa	*bakha*

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY. **Mode.** According to the traditional courtship pattern, a group of young male relatives and friends made nightly visits to the house of some virgin girl in another village, appraising her through banter while she and her parents appraised them, and staying the night to avoid the dark walk home. Marriage was according to the wishes of the parents after negotiation by a go-between from the boy's side. Girls might be 15, and boys 17, years of age. Girls have now acquired freedom of movement through attending school, however. Premarital sexual play is common, and young people choose their own spouses when the girl is about 19 and the boy 21. The most common mode of marriage is elopement, for Christians and non-Christians alike, but some Christians marry in church, and some Khasis still marry according to the traditional ceremony or some variation on it. There are no preferred or prescribed marriage types, nor is there a bride price or dowry. **Form.** Monogamy is the ideal for all. **Extension of incest taboos.** Sibs are exogamous. Other prohibited marriage partners are real and classificatory FaSi and FaBr, FaBrCh, FaMo, and FaMoMo. The MoBrWi is also prohibited. Roy

says that the MoBrCh but not the FaSiCh is prohibited (1897: 2), but Gurdon says that the MoBrCh is eligible after the death of MoBr, and that FaSiCh is eligible after the death of Fa (1907: 78). Nowadays both types of marriage occur, whether the linking relative is living or dead. **Residence.** Residence is either duolocal or matrilocal under the roof of the wife's mother until the birth of one or two children. For a man married to a youngest daughter, it then continues to be matrilocal. For men married to other daughters, it becomes uxorilocal; there have also always been cases of virilocal residence, and it is now common to find neolocal residence in Shillong. For non-Christian Jaintias, it is duolocal throughout the marriage. **Domestic unit.** The domestic unit is the elementary family, though for a youngest daughter it may temporarily include also her aged mother, aged father, unmarried siblings, or divorced or widowed brothers. **Inheritance.** Traditionally, after the Khasi mother had helped each of her daughters to build and supply a house when each one married and had children, her only real obligation to help them economically was ended. Everything she possessed, excepting certain personalty that was destroyed in her cremation, was inherited by her youngest daughter. Failing daughters, a woman's property reverted to her next youngest sister's daughter. Today, this pattern is often modified by putting more property into the hands of older daughters and even sons. [Cf. Cantlie 1934; Becker 1924.] **Divorce.** A woman may effect numerous and usually brief separations from her husband by simply closing the door of her house to him, whereupon he returns to the house of his mother or youngest sister. Divorce, however, must be initiated by mutual consent. Divorce is very common, even though women resist it because they do not wish to lose a provider, and men because they do not wish to lose their children. Formerly it was accomplished by a simple ritual in the presence of witnesses, followed by public announcement by a town crier. Now, the witnesses and the public announcement have been dispensed with, and evidence for divorce consists only in the word of the parties concerned.

835 [114]• [178] 591 592 428 [178] 586 586 178

SOCIOPOLITICAL ORGANIZATION. **Political organization.** The basic unit of political organization is the village, which is composed of one or more dominant local descent groups plus several others. Village government is by an assembly of all resident adult males, under the informal chairmanship of a headman elected by them from among their number. The membership of any immigrant household into a village is defined by the participation of the household's males in this assembly. Sustained membership in a village is voluntary. Khasi chiefdoms probably arose out of voluntary associations of villages, which occasionally transferred allegiance from one chief to another.

62 174 619

also active, and in that decade one U Kyrhai, a Khasi convert to Presbyterianism, left that church and founded a unique sect that blends something of himself with something of mystical Hinduism and Christianity. The competitors who most seriously threatened the dominance of the Welsh Presbyterians were the Roman Catholic missionaries who arrived in Shillong about 1890. Catholics have since opened a number of high schools, colleges, convents, and orphanages. They also established a technical school, and are now constructing a seminary. At the present time, one estimate is that there are about 100,000 Presbyterians and 80,000 Roman Catholics among Khasis. Members of other Christian sects are comparatively few; adherents to Hinduism and Islam are fewer still, comprised chiefly of Khasi women married to Hindu or Muslim men; U Kyrhai's sect is dying out; and the balance of Khasis are, according to their own term, "Khasi" in religion. [Cf. Lyngdoh 1937; Morris 1910; Ropmay 1940; Singh 1950; Pugh 1951.] **Supernaturals.** The great deities are two, an unnamed masculine God (U Blei) and an unnamed feminine Goddess (Ka Blei Nongsynshar Nonghukum). God created the earth, and in the beginning instructed man in cultivation techniques and also laid down the framework of a moral order that should guide his every move if he wished to join God in heaven after death. This framework was then filled in by the first ancestors, who are therefore the authorities on the subject and are semideified as Ka Iawbei (the mother), U Thawlang (the father), and U Suidñia (the mother's brother). Very early, Goddess undertook to keep account of the numbers of human beings on earth, and this role was so important, relating as it did to the health and the multiplication of the people, that she became of major importance in the Khasi pantheon. When sin beset human society, God activated automatic punishments in the form of natural calamities, and man finally decided that some animal should go and intercede with God on behalf of humans. The cock went, agreed to take upon himself the burden of human sin, and received instruction in the correct divinatory and sacrificial techniques for which he would be one of the main objects of the knife. Again, over a period of time, it was the ancestors who perfected these techniques. Now, God is regarded as powerful and merciful, but passive. His punishments have their own impetus, and the expression of His mercy is solidified in ritual. Goddess is more vaguely conceived, but is much closer to the individual. [But cf. Ehrenfels 1950, who conceives of one double-sexed, great deity among Khasis.] Regarding ancestors, it is never clear from prayers whether supplication is to generalized semideities or to particular first ancestors of a Khasi's own matrilineage, and such a distinction seems not to matter. There are three other categories of minor deities: those who protect places (such as villages, groves, or springs),

797
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[162]
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[114]
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771
[769]

18: Godwin-Austen G-3 (ca. 1872) 1875 AR7
Khasi AR7

clans were very much as we find them at the present day among the Nagas and Kukis, beyond and bordering our present extreme limits, viz. that of constant feud. They are now the quietest, most peaceful, and contented of all the hill people on the eastern frontier.

In my former paper I did not allude to the cairns in these hills, which I am inclined to think are works of greater age than the stone structures. The custom is one that certainly has long since been given up, for I could not obtain any satisfactory account of them. They are only to be seen on the northern side of the Khasi plateau, and Dr. Hooker, in his account of his trips to the Kollong Rock, did not fail to notice them. About Mairaug and towards Nougstoiu they are very numerous, and always stand on commanding situations. On the path leading down the grassy spur to the stone monuments previously described, near Nougshai, is a very fine large example of a cairn, about eight feet high. They are usually plain hemispherical mounds of earth; but this one is faced all round at the base with slabs of stone about four feet high; they are frequently not higher than six feet. A distant view is shown in Plate iii.

Nowhere is there any trace of the earth that forms them having been excavated close by; it must, therefore, have been carried in some short distance, to avoid unsightly hollows near the structure. I should much like to have dug into one of these cairns, but was afraid to hurt the feelings of the people by doing so. They are very probably cineraries of an earlier form to those now made of stone, and this point it might be interesting to clear up.

Beyond the Khasi area no cairns are to be found, at least I had never come across any until visiting North Munipur last winter (1872—73), where, at the head of the Imphal river, on the direct road from Samaguting, are four fine cairns, all faced with large boulders. They are old, and the Nagas now living in the village near said they had been made by another clan of Nagas, who long ago had gone further north, and the site of whose village had been lately re-occupied by Kukis.

Mr. C. B. Clarke, in a paper read lately before your Institute, refers to the different forms of the cinerary in the Khasi Hills; but he has not quite exhausted the subject, or got further than I did, although with regard to the disposal of the ashes of the dead he gives some further interesting particulars.

As I think that drawings are of very great interest, and better exhibit the many different forms of bone depository or cinerary that have been adopted at different periods by tribes inhabiting localities very far apart, and often quite unconnected affinitively,

18: Godwin-Austen G-3 (ca. 1872) 1875 AR7
Khasi AR7

of more scientific value; and the vocabularies given by the author in this paper would, no doubt, be found of great use to comparative philologists. He hoped that the Institute would be favoured with some further information on the races of Borneo from Lieut. de Crespigny.

With regard to the paper by Major Godwin-Austen, he (the President) would say his communications were always welcome to the Institute. He wished that a more detailed account had been given of the intrenchment referred to. There appears to have been a great camp-building period in the life of most races, when neighbouring tribes were constantly at war, and each had its stronghold in case of attack. Such camps are conspicuous amongst the antiquities of nearly all parts of the world, and a comparison of the different sytems of defence adopted, when viewed by the knowledge of the art of castrametation which we possess, affords reliable evidence of psychical connections. In the early British camps of this country he had never seen any evidence of the use of flanking defence except at the entrances; but the description given by Major Austin of this earthwork appeared to indicate that something of the kind was known to these people.

511 It is seen that the per family average annual expenditure is Rs.909·00 nP. in Border areas, Rs.1008 00 nP. in Project area and Rs.828·00 nP. in General area. The per family annual net income in the respective area being Rs.852·86 nP., Rs.988·84 nP, and Rs.949·51 nP. it follows that the budget of the average family is deficit in all the areas. [426] This deficit is usually made up either by restricting the consumption expenditure during the lean months of the agricultural year or by taking loans.

221 The field work of the survey was started during the month of February, 511 *i.e.*, hardly after two months, of harvesting of winter paddy and during the harvesting period of cash crops like orange, betelnut, potatoes, etc. During this period people get money through the sale proceeds and naturally they [114] were tempted to spend comparatively higher amount on food. In fact, it was made clear during investigation that as lean months are approaching when people did not have money to purchase food articles, they used to lead a very austere life. This period is particularly very hard for the Border people because unlike people of other two areas they do not have [128] even paddy in store. As the above figures of annual expenditure of a [125] family were calculated on the basis of information collected for one month preceeding the date of investigation, in respect of food and non-food articles, and for one year in respect of miscellaneous items, there is every likelihood of the average per family expenditure on food and non-food articles being over-estimated.

128 As in the case of income, consumption of articles produced at home 511 or at farm as well as those received out of the goods, services and gift and loan were valued in money terms on the basis of the local average retail prices in respect of the commodities concerned. Thus even firewood and other wild vegetables and fishes obtained by fishing were valued in terms of money. Of the total average expenditure on food, the food articles obtained in kind and consumed at home account for about 18 per cent in Border area, 53 per cent in Project area and 57 per cent in General area. Thus the share of food articles obtained in kind and consumed at home to the annual expenditure of a family is very low in Border area. This is natural because they depend almost exclusively on cash crop cultivation.

511 Out of the total expenditure, food account for about 68 per cent in Border area, 67 per cent in Project area and 73 per cent in General area. In all the areas cereals alone took the bulk of the expenditure on food, *i.e.*, 66 per cent, 75 per cent and 81 per cent in the respective areas

It is seen that expenditure on pulses, vegetables and milk are very low. In fact only a few of the Tribal villagers take pulses, milk and vegetables. Rice and fish or meat are the only items of the dishes of most of the villages.

Among non-food articles fuel and light accounted for 6 per cent in Border area, 5 per cent in Project area, and 5 per cent in General area. Khasis are heavy chewers of betelnut and this accounted for 5 per cent of total annual expenditure in border area, 4 per cent in Project area and about 3 per cent in General area while tobacco and tea in tea-stall accounted for about 5 per cent, 4 per cent and 4 per cent respectively of the total annual expenditure in the three areas. Expenditure on liquor

21: Ehrenfels E-4,5 (1950) 1953 AR7 Khasi AR7

Khasi Kinship Terms in four Dialects

By U. R. Ehrenfels, Ph D. (Vienna)

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II. The List of the Kinship Terms
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1. General
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I. Introductory Remarks

Professor K. P. Chattopadhyay (Calcutta University) published in 1941 an analysis of Khasi kinship terms [1] based on eight genealogies which he collected in the Mawphlang area, about sixteen miles south-west of Shillong [2]. He discussed in this paper a previous publication by Professor Hodson [3] where special features of certain Khasi kinship terms are held to prove the pre-existence of a dual system in a one-time Khasi social order and he quotes also the late Rai Bahadur S. C. Roy's work on Khasi kinship [4] and lists of Assamese relationship terms, contained in "Census of India Reports" [5] and Khasi terms in U Nissor Singh's "Khasi-English Dictionary" [6], P. R. T. Gurdon's monograph on the Khasi [7] and in Sir Keith Cantlie's "Notes on Khasi Law" [8]. Discussing these previously published papers, Chattopadhyay arrives at the conclusion that Hodson's hypothesis of a dual organization in a hypothetical former Khasi society was not justified [9].

The present paper, however, does not enter into discussion of this

[1] Chattopadhyay (1941).
[2] Ibid., p. 1.
[3] Hodson (1921).
[4] Roy (1921).
[5] McSwiney (1911), pp. 74/75. The Census Report of 1891, quoted by Chattopadhyay (1941), p. 1, is not available to me at the time of writing.
[6] Nissor Singh (1906).
[7] Gurdon (1914).
[8] Cantlie (1934).
[9] Chattopadhyay (1941), pp. 27, 35.

21: Ehrenfels E-4,5 (1950) 1953 AR7 Khasi AR7

question and indeed has been compiled without knowledge of Professor CHATTOPADHYAY's work, and before he very kindly sent a private copy of this work, which had not been available to me previously.

The present paper offers data on the following subjects:

1. Khasi kinship terms from the Mawshai Khasi plateau-area in the Khyrim State, about 20 to 30 miles south-east of Shillong, which are in some minor details different from the Mawphlang data, collected by CHATTOPADHYAY, south-west of Shillong;
2. Comparative data from the Wár-Khasi;
3. from the plateau-area of Jowai in the Jaintia [10] Hills, and
4. from the Wár-Jaintia;
5. Aspects of the Khasi kinship terms, with special reference to the matrilineal order of society, and to the respective position of women and men there, especially the particular consideration which the biological relationship through the father receives in kinship terminology, in spite of the emphasis on the matrilineal structure in Khasi society (comp. term No. 1 of the list and its discussion in para 3/*b* of the present paper, on p. 408).

The data were collected in field researches to which I was enabled by two Research Grants for comparative studies in matrilineal civilizations of India, given by the Viking Fund Inc. (now: Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research) in New York, during the periods 1949-50 and 1951-52. My gratefulness to the foundation for enabling me to carry out these field researches, as well as to the University of Madras, for granting me Sabbathical leaves for the same purpose, is here once more recorded.

My research programme was based on the first tentative working hypothesis, laid down in my book "Mother-right in India" [11], but includes also various other aspects of study which have not been pre-planned, or even considered there [12], as for instance also the present comparative study of kinship terms in areas of four Khasi dialects and their special significance to the Khasi matrilineal social system. The material was collected during a five weeks house-to-house study in the recently founded Plateau Khasi village Maw Syn Jri, during April and May 1950. This village consisted mostly of houses, owned by Khasi elder sisters and inhabited by them, with their families, after they had left the ancestral home in the main village Kharang, about one mile across the valley on the western side of the new settlement. The ancestral family houses there were in the possession of either the mother, or, if she was no more alive, the youngest daughter of the family, the *ka khun khaddu* [13].

[10] Jaintia, (Pnár or "Synteng") are the Khasi speaking eastern neighbours of the Khasi proper. As among the Khasi, so also among Jaintia the people in the cool plateau highlands are in many ways different from those who settled in the luscious tropical rainforests of the southern slopes, now situated just north of the East Pakistan frontier: — the so-called Wár-country, where economy is mainly based on pan-leaf gardening.

[11] EHRENFELS (1941).

[12] EHRENFELS (1950/*A*), (1950/*B*), (1950/*C*), (1950/*D*), (1950/*E*), (1951/*A*), (1951/*B*).

[13] GURDON (1914), pp. 83, seq., CANTLIE (1934), p. 11.

21: Ehrenfels E-4,5 (1950) 1953 AR7 Khasi AR7

It will here be recalled that the Khasi are a matrilineal agricultural people, pre-litterate until the advent of the British in the sixth decade of the 19th century, organized under democratically ruling *siem*, or Khasi princes and chieftains and speaking an Austro-Asiatic language [14]. Their physical affinities are unmistakably mongoloid and quite distinct from the Assamese speaking plains-Indians, — but not from the other mountaineers of Assam, Nepal and even Burmah or China, with whom they feel to be more closely related, as with the Indian plainspeople, as some of the tribal designations in the following lists of terms for Non-Khasi testifies (comp. No. 41 as against No. 42, 43 and 43/*a-e*).

In the collection of the material, I was hampered by my inability to pick up the Khasi language sufficiently quickly, for conversation without the help of an interpreter, but on the other hand greatly eased by generous and voluntary assistance on the part of several Khasi friends, especially U Ekiman Singh, the President, Unitarian Union, Khasi- and Jaintai Hills and his (Khasi) wife, Ka Austria [15], who offered me hospitality in their house at Maw Syn Jri, during my stay there. Dr. H. LYNGDOH, Shillong, the author of detailed accounts on Khasi religious ceremonial and institutions [16], U Jeeban Roy, a leading Pnár gentleman of Jowei in the Jaintia Hills, Ka Ellen Giri, Principal, Govt. Basic Education Training Centre, Malki, Shillong, Ka Kongmen, Shillong, and U David Roy, Prime Minister (retd.), and a number of hospitable Wár Khasi and Wár-Jaintia pan-leaf cultivators in the southern slopes of the Khasi- and Jaintia Hills, especially from the villages Mawlat and Padu, also helped me greatly in my task. My thanks are due to all of them.

The data, submitted and briefly described in this paper were thus collected in four different areas.

1. The South-eastern corner of the Khasi-Hills (plateau-area),
2. the southern slopes of the Khasi Hills, the "Wár-Khasi country" between the Khasi plateau proper and the northern boundary of East Pakistan,
3. the central plateau of the Jaintia Hills, round its capital market Jowei, and
4. the southern slopes of the Jaintia Hills, the "Wár-Jaintia country" between these and a section of the northern boundary of East Pakistan, further to the East than area 2.

Slightly different Khasi dialects are spoken in these four regions, Jaintia (Pnár or "Synteng") and Wár-Jaintia being more akin to each other, similarly as Plateau-Khasi and Wár-Khasi are.

The Pnár or Jaintias ("Synteng" is a slightly opprobious designation, used by the Plateau-Khasi for these, their eastern neighbours) look back

[14] SCHMIDT (1906).

[15] So named, because Austria was much in the news at the time of her birth, during the first world war; — a fact which illustrates the Khasi peculiarity to use either ad hoc inventions as names for children, or to adopt such, from the Khasi point of view, outlandish words like: "Ka Austria" or "Ka Mediterranean Sea" as names for their children.

[16] LYNGDOH (1937).

21: Ehrenfels E-4,5 (1950) 1953 AR7 Khasi AR7

III. Explanations

1. General

Most of my informants were illiterate. The spelling of the terms was checked and corrected by my English-speaking and writing Khasi- and Pnár- friends, mentioned in para one, to whom thanks are being here once more expressed. All responsibility for spelling mistakes, however, which may have slipped into this list has of course to be borne by me.

Blanks (—) or question marks (?) in one of the columns do not necessarily mean that there is no word used, by the respective group, for the particular term. They more often indicate that my informants did not use, or know, the particular term, or that I failed to enquire about it in a manner sufficiently clear to my informants. This is particularly true of general terms, partly or fully corresponding to English general terms, such as parents or grand-parents, or the terms No. 9/*a* and *b*, 13, 15/*a*, 19-21, and 26, which were partly explained to me, by Khasi friends in Shillong, where I stayed some time after completion of field-work during the rainy season. Hence I could no more return for verification to the little accessible Wár-villages in the steep southern slopes. Although I am planning to utilise a future opportunity for such checking up, I am yet publishing the present results in the hope that they may thus become accessible to field-workers among other S. E.-Asiatic, and especially Austro-Asiatic speaking peoples.

All terms which are equal for both sexes (cf. Nos. 10, 11, 18, 19, etc.) are used with *ka* and *u* respectively. These sexdetermining preposed articles, as also the honorific *i* are specially mentioned in the list, only if this is essential for the understanding of the respective terms as in Nos. 3-5, 7, 8, or 10.

2. Special

Term No. 1 — to give birth or beget (*kha*) signifies also relatives on the paternal side as in *para kha* (paternal cousins No. 9/*c*), in contradistinction to *para kur*, 9/*b*, (lit.: cousins of the clan), i. e. maternal cousins, since the clan is a matrilineal unit. This usage of the word *kha* appears also significantly in the terms 15/*a*, 17, 18/*b*, 20, 22, 32 and, as an integral part of the Khasi kinship terminology, renders it highly improbable that the Khasi matrilineal system could lave originated in ignorance of the biological function of the father. It is a significant feature in the matrilineal social system.

The terms 3 to 3/*b* refer to unmarried but biologically marriageable youths. It will be noted that there are (and were in 1914) no indications of puberty-rites for either girls or boys. There is also no child-marriage among Khasi. The use of special terms for mature, unmarried youths is therefore significant.

Term 6 — *i* as honorific article, is at the same time indicative of diminution [23], which is remarkable for two reasons: (firstly) the diminution is used for the oldest and most respected family members, like the diminution

[23] NISSOR SINGH (1906), p. 84.